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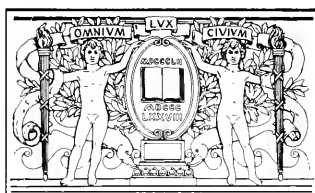
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GOVERNMENT CENTER PROJECT

CITY PLANNING BOARD • BOSTON,
MASSACHUSETTS • JANUARY, 1958

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Report on the
P R O P O S E D G O V E R N M E N T C E N T E R
Redevelopment Project

January, 1958

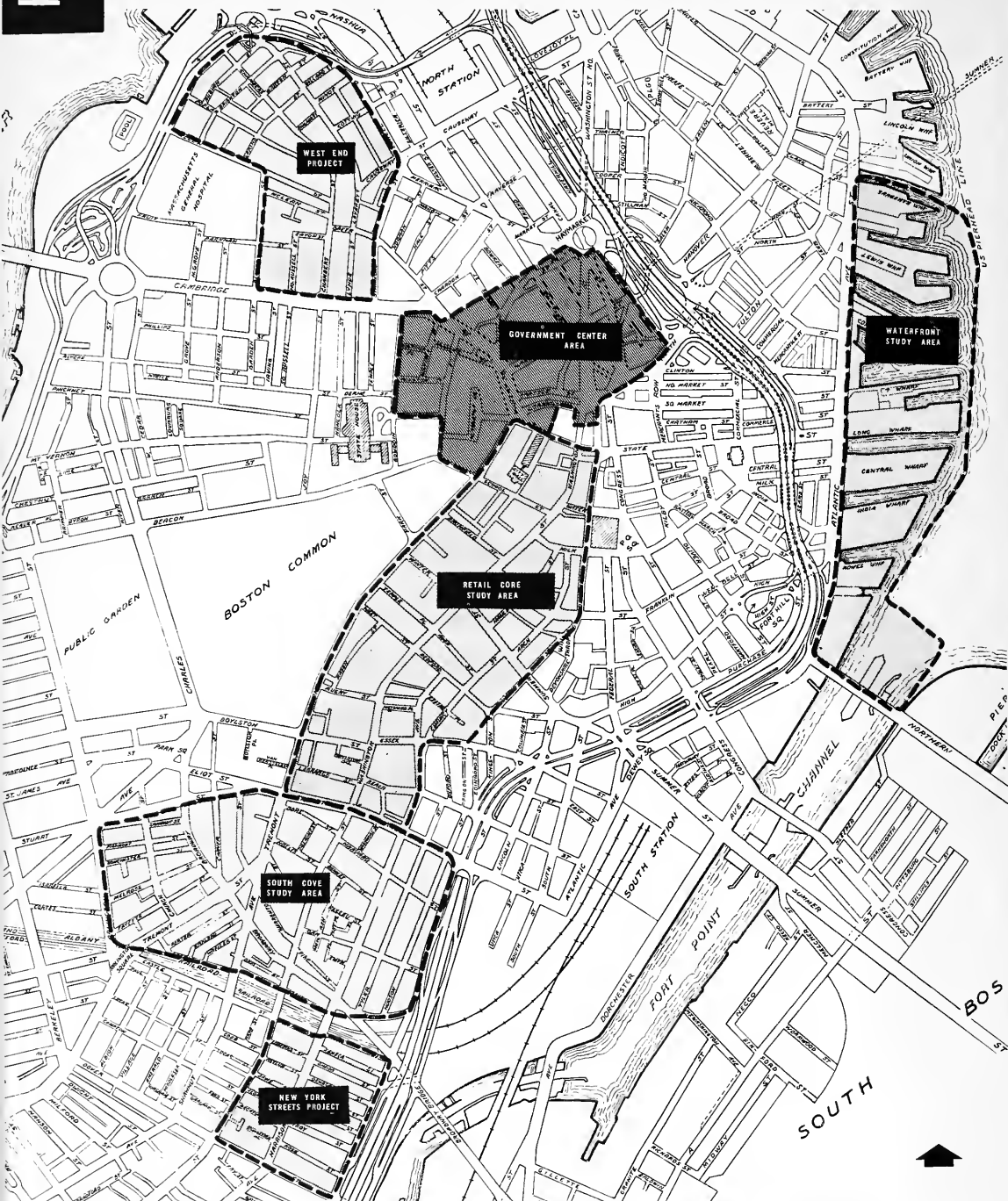
The City Planning Board
Boston, Massachusetts

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Joseph A. Mitchell, Vice-Chairman

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Frederick A. Davis
Margaret Divver
Carl Dreyfus
Edward C. Keane
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LOCATION MAP



GOVERNMENT CENTER PROJECT

January, 1958

CITY PLANNING BOARD

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

0 400 800
SCALE IN FEET

S U M M A R Y

All levels of government - City, County, State, Federal - are in need of adequate and economical office space in Boston.

A site can be provided in downtown Boston for all of these accommodations within a single efficient center.

This integrated Government Center can be built on land now occupied by decadent and obsolete properties.

The proposed Center would be located close to existing Government buildings, the retail heart of the city, and the downtown office district. It has mass transit and automobile access advantages that cannot be duplicated elsewhere.

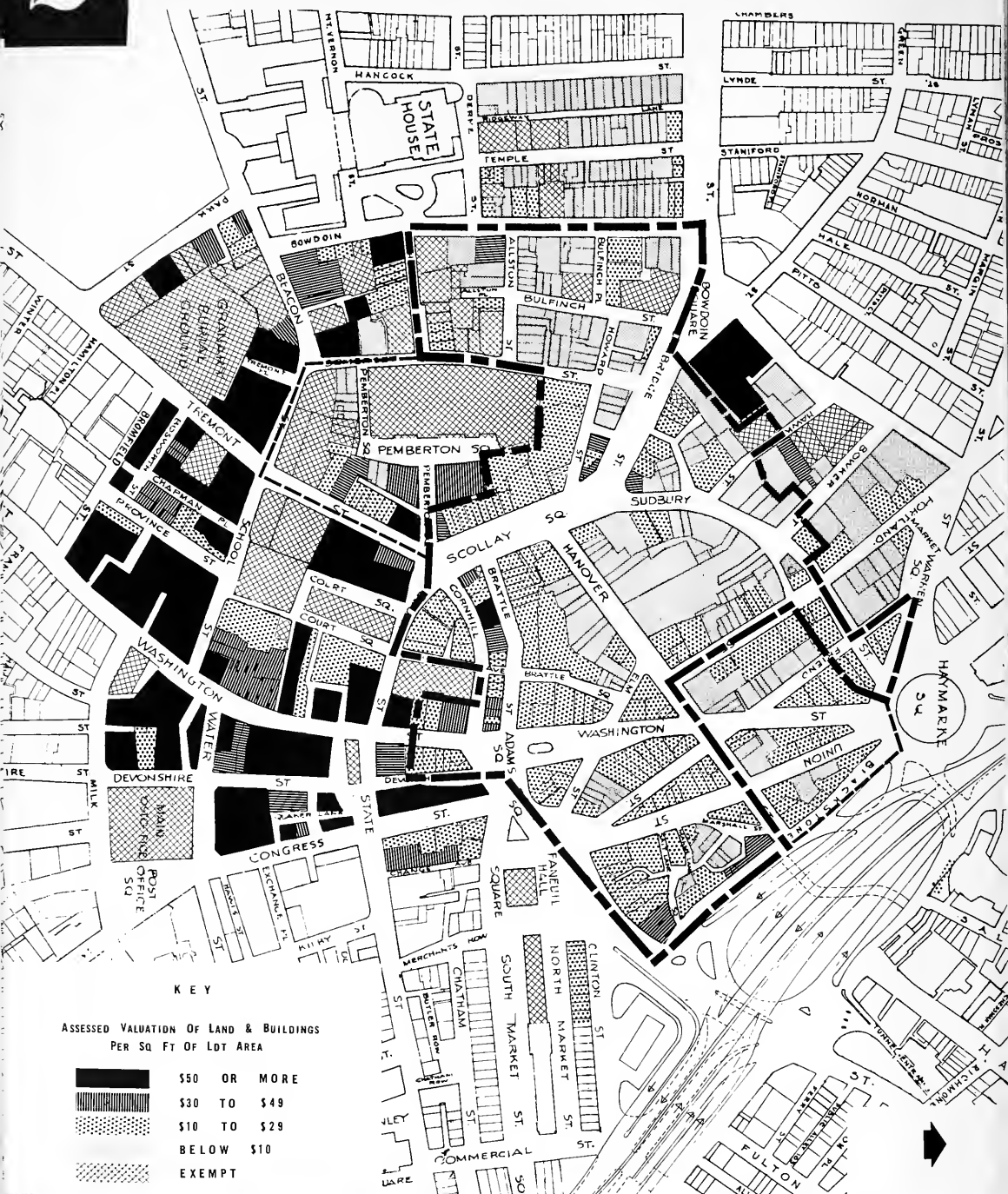
The construction of the Center would serve to stabilize private property values in the vicinity and to generate substantial new private investment.

It would be able to capitalize on the famous "Freedom Trail" of historic sites in and near the project area.

The proposal has already received enthusiastic support from business, civic and labor groups and government officials.

The Government Center is a large-scale undertaking. It can become a place of functional beauty. It can increase the attractiveness of Boston as a place to live and do business, and it can add greatly to the prestige that Boston now enjoys throughout the world.

ASSESSED VALUATION: 1957



REPORT ON THE PROPOSED GOVERNMENT CENTER REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The future of Boston depends in large degree on how effectively and efficiently it continues to perform its role as the central city of an important metropolitan area and as the regional center for New England, a major region of the United States.

One of the basic functions of such a regional center is the provision of governmental services at all levels - municipal, county, state, and Federal. As our population increases and as our technological society grows more complex, these governmental services expand. To keep these expanded activities performing efficiently the physical quarters housing them require improvement, modernization, enlargement, replacement.

At the present time the accommodations in Boston for all levels of government are inadequate and inefficient. It is widely recognized that the costs of maintaining some of the quarters now in use and the costs of doing business at some of the present scattered locations are unnecessarily high. These facts have been documented repeatedly in reports issued by governmental departments, agencies, and study commissions. A new Federal office building, for example, would enable Federal agencies to be assembled from eleven mostly sub-standard separate locations at an annual rental savings of approximately \$995,000.

The opportunity now exists to create the essential new governmental accommodations in a single integrated center in downtown Boston; the proposed Government Center at Scollay Square. (See Map 1).

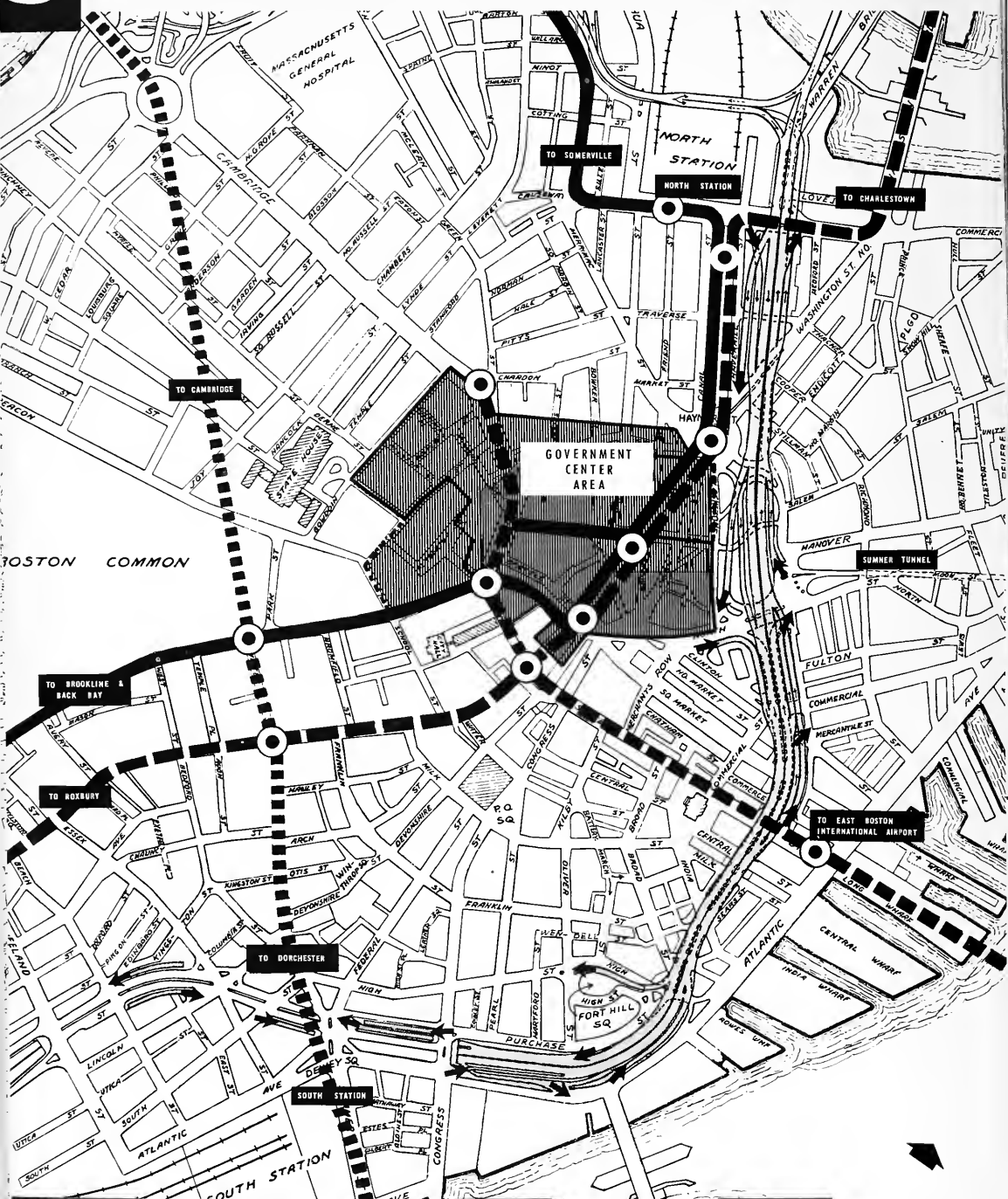
AVAILABILITY OF SITE

Because such an integrated center requires the assembly of land on a large scale, the site selected must be one available at reasonable cost in which the present uses of the land are outmoded and decadent. The Government Center site proposed by the Boston City Planning Board meets these requirements.

The properties now occupying the site are seriously dilapidated. There is a dire need to eliminate the present conditions, which are hazardous to the public health and safety. Redevelopment is required to prevent the continued decline of property values in the area and to check the deep blight spreading into adjacent areas. (See Map 2).

EXCELLENT ACCESS AND LOCATION

New government offices should be convenient to existing public buildings that would continue in use. The site is immediately adjacent to the State House and the Veterans Administration Building and two blocks from Post Office Square where both the Post Office and the Federal Reserve Bank are located.



The proposed Government Center should have good transportation access. It will generate a high volume of pedestrian traffic, both workers and visitors. All of the rapid transit lines in the Metropolitan Transit Authority system, one of the world's finest urban transportation systems, serve the site. Six stations on three lines are located within or immediately adjacent to the site. (See Map 3).

Automobile access is equally good. The site is served directly by the Central Artery, part of metropolitan Boston's advanced system of limited access expressways; by the Sumner Tunnel to East Boston and the North Shore; and by Cambridge Street, a principal access route to the Central Business District.

One existing parking garage and another scheduled for early construction are immediately adjacent to the site. Unusual opportunities exist to provide ample additional parking facilities in either garages or off-street plazas within the project area itself.

An office development of this size should be convenient to stores, banks, restaurants, and other personal and consumer service facilities. The retail and office centers of downtown Boston are within walking distance of the Government Center. (See Map 4).

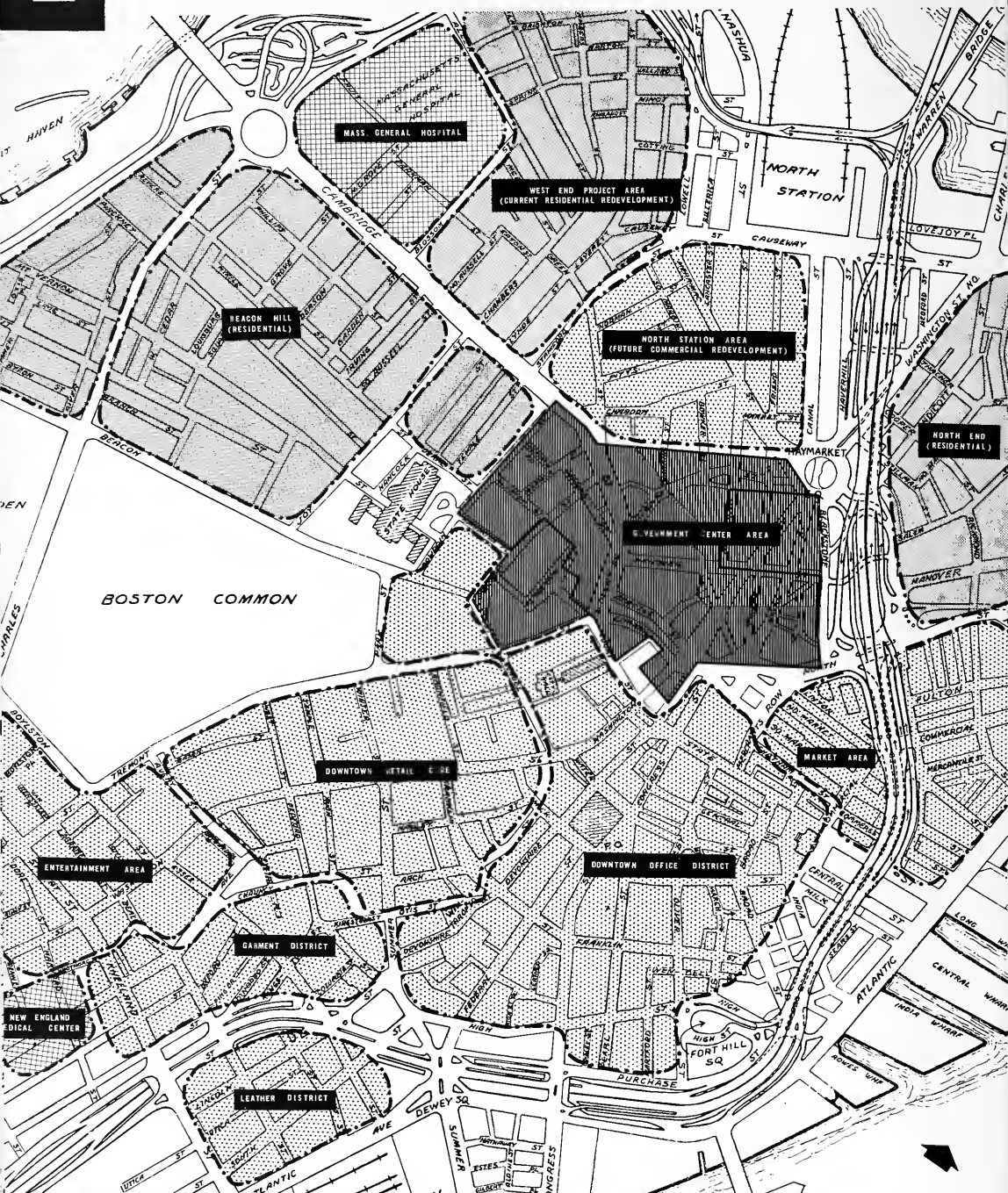
An integrated Government Center in the proposed location would be of inestimable supporting value to these downtown retail and office functions. Shoppers, workers, and businessmen frequently have occasion to visit government offices.

GOVERNMENT CENTER OBJECTIVES

In addition to creating an efficient office center and eliminating the existing deteriorated, decadent, and obsolete buildings and uses now in the area, the Government Center project is designed to achieve three other major objectives:

- (1) The street and block pattern within the proposed project area is antiquated and inadequate. (See Map 5). The plan provides for more direct and simplified traffic movements within the Center. (See Map 6). These street improvements are beneficial to the Center and contribute as well to improved access to other parts of downtown.
- (2) The plan capitalizes on the unusually good access to the site by rapid transit. The increased use of these transit facilities is essential to the future welfare of metropolitan Boston.
- (3) The plan provides for the creation of necessary new public facilities in a presently low value area in a way designed to encourage new private investment and to stabilize and increase the values of existing properties adjacent to the Center.

GENERALIZED LAND USE



GOVERNMENT CENTER PROJECT

CITY PLANNING BOARD

January, 1958

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

0 200 400 800

SCALE IN FEET

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLANS

This integrated large-scale development provides an excellent opportunity to create an efficient and pleasant interrelationship of buildings within and abutting the Center. The illustrative site plans suggest how this might be accomplished. (See Maps 7 and 8). As shown on these site plans, the project area is divided into six basic segments:

(1) State Building Site: The major considerations are pedestrian proximity to the present State buildings and convenient vehicular access to Cambridge Street, an adequate feeder street. The illustrative site plans show a location for new State office construction between Bowdoin and Somerset Streets. A direct pedestrian ramp could be provided between the proposed and the existing buildings, and a parking garage could be built adjacent to the office accommodations with adequate street access to Cambridge Street. The plans assume office building floor area requirements of 750,000 square feet.

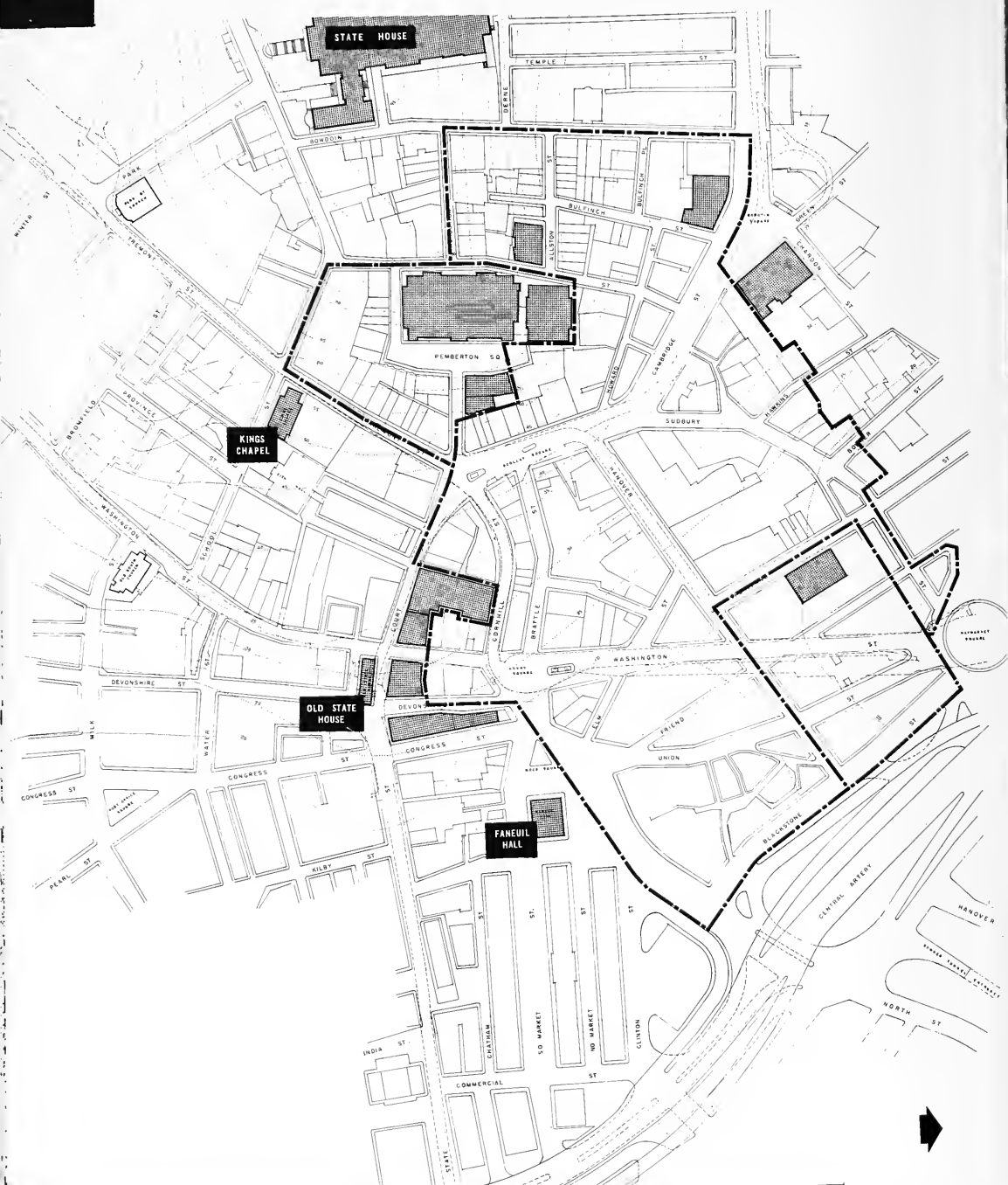
(2) County Building Site: The old Suffolk County Court House is in need of replacement. Site Plan "B" shows a proposed replacement building with 250,000 square feet of floor area located between the existing new County Court House and Scollay Square. This will free the old Court House site for private development. Site Plan "A" illustrates how the site for the replacement building can be utilized for an interim period as a parking plaza. Although the construction of the proposed Court House is not imminent, it is important that the blighting effect of the present deteriorated properties fronting on Scollay Square be eliminated. These properties should be acquired and demolished as part of the first stage of the Government Center redevelopment project.

(3) Federal Building Site: The proposed Federal office building would front on Scollay Square, flanked by improved streets on either side. The new block pattern proposes an area large enough to provide for an ample building site, suitable landscaping and pedestrian plaza treatment as may be determined in a final site plan, and space for off-street parking in garages or plazas. The actual land area to be acquired for Federal building purposes within the block allocated should be fixed by negotiation with the Federal authorities. The plan allows for a floor area of as much as 1,000,000 square feet.

(4) City Hall Site: To complete the chain of new government office accommodations in the Center extending from the State House to Faneuil Hall, a site would be provided for a 400,000 square foot City Hall at Dock Square. As in the other suggested sites, final layout of the City Hall and related landscaping and off-street parking accommodations would depend on final site and architectural plans.

In each of these areas sufficient land has been allocated to provide for such additional public buildings as a consolidated police station, a School Committee building, or others as may be required.

PROPOSED PROJECT AREA

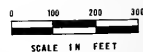


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SCALE IN FEET

(5) Private Development Areas: The sites provided for new private development within the Government Center are of two general types: (a) small prime sites for building construction located between the proposed public buildings and the present retailing and office building concentration to the south and (b) large new blocks created by the improved Hanover Street and the proposed new street between Bowdoin Square and Haymarket Square.

The marketability for each of these general types of areas must be analyzed carefully before the final limits of the project area can be fixed. The uses for the land that at this point appear most appropriate are consumer and business services for the small sites and private enterprise parking within the large blocks, although the market study must examine other uses to evaluate their suitability.

Conceivably the southern boundary of the project should extend to the corner of Beacon and Tremont Streets on the south and to Haymarket Square on the north if the market for the land is strong enough to warrant an enlarged project and if private enterprise would require public land assembly assistance to make the sites available.

At the very minimum the Government Center project must be large enough to permit private enterprise to provide: (a) the accessory services to meet the demand created by more than two million square feet of floor space in new government buildings and (b) off-street parking accommodations insofar as it would be economically sound for private parties to do so.

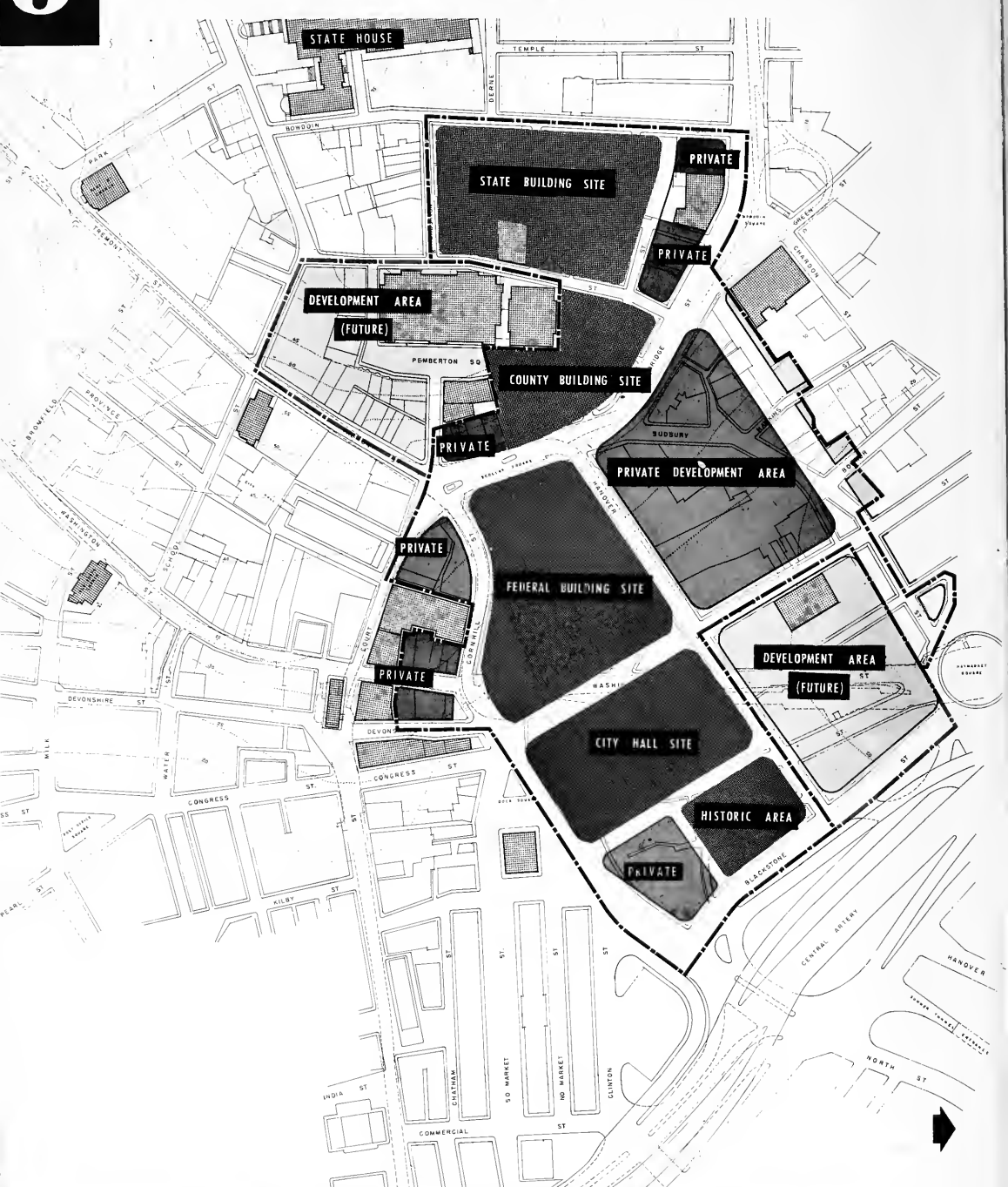
(6) Additional Public Sites: Since the Government Center will change the face of downtown Boston radically and will help shape its character for generations, it is absolutely essential that its physical layout be as efficient and attractive as any such center in the world, in keeping with the Boston tradition of charm and livability. To achieve this, it will be necessary to utilize some of the land area made available within this project for public pedestrian ways and landscaped open space.

Related to this consideration is the opportunity to take advantage of historic assets within and near the Center. These include the State House, the Old State House, Faneuil Hall, the Ebenezer Hancock House, the Union Oyster House, and the Boston Stone. Converting these existing structures and monuments into strong and positive historic, cultural, and economic assets by suitable site treatment is part of the comprehensive site plan for the Center.

SITE AREAS AND PROPERTY VALUES

As delineated on Map 5, the project area is 32 gross acres in size and the total 1957 assessment of land and buildings is \$12 million.

PROPOSED PROJECT PLAN



The accompanying plan, Map 6, allocates the net land area available for development and the approximate valuations as follows:

	Land Area Sq. Feet	Total 1957 Valuation
State building site	180,000	\$1,900,000
County building site	90,000	1,100,000
Federal building site	180,000	2,300,000
City Hall site	150,000	1,100,000
Private development areas	350,000	5,000,000
Historic area	<u>40,000</u>	<u>600,000</u>
Total	990,000	\$12,000,000

If the project were expanded as shown on Map 6, 320,000 square feet of land assessed at \$4,200,000 would be added for future private development for a new project total of 1.3 million square feet at a total assessment of \$16 million.

The land areas allocated for public building sites are maximum figures. When the final plan is developed, and actual land requirements for the public buildings determined, smaller land area requirements may result, with more land thus made available for private use.

BACKGROUND FOR THE PROJECT

Since the publication of the Boston City Planning Board's "Government Center Study, A Preliminary Report" in August 1956 widespread support for the proposal has developed.

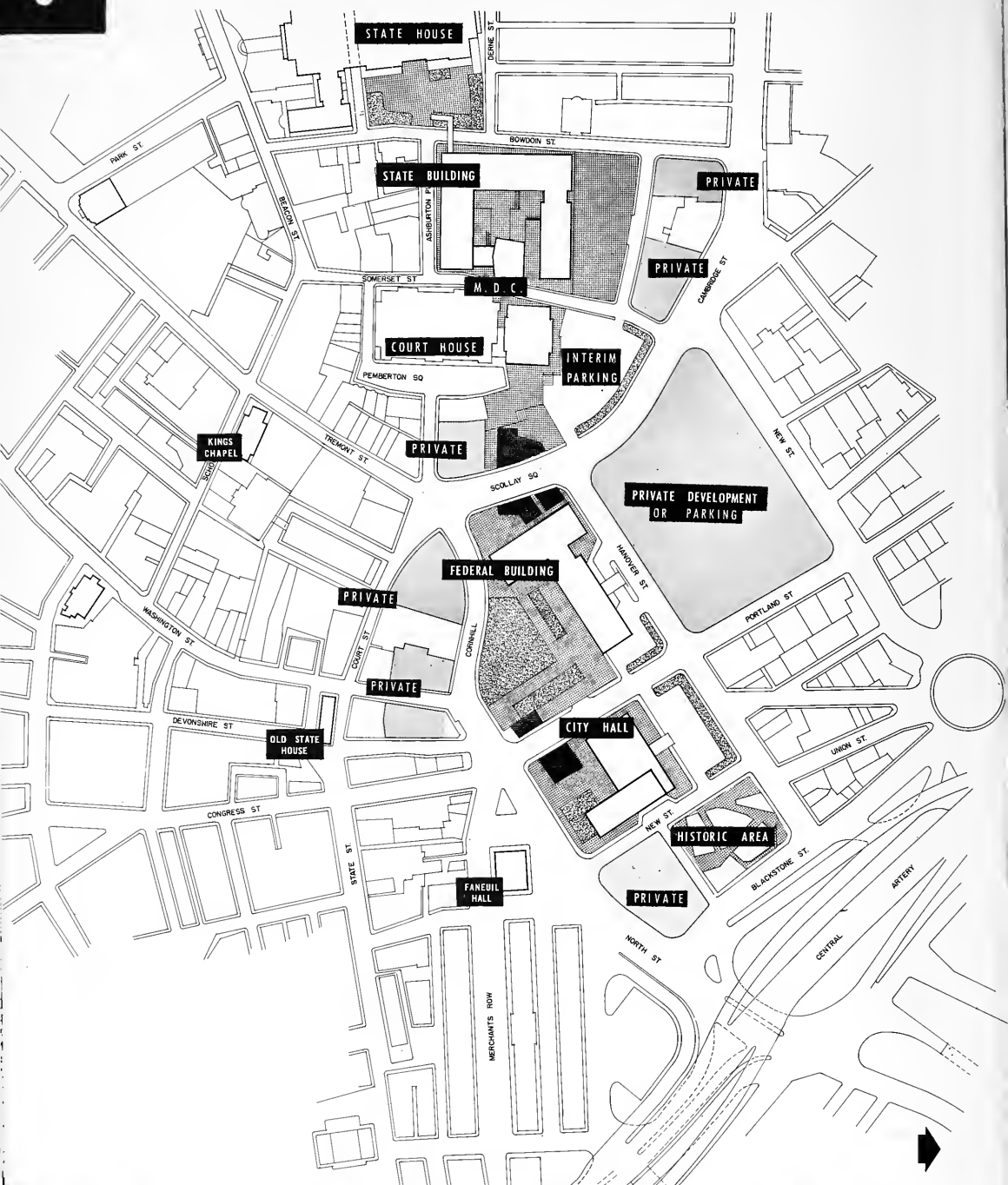
The original Planning Board proposal received Mayor Hynes' immediate endorsement as well as favorable response from the press.

The proposal has had the sustained support of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Committee on Civic Progress, the Boston Real Estate Board, the Municipal Research Bureau, the Retail Trade Board, labor organizations, civic groups and government officials, particularly the members of the Boston City Council and leaders of the Boston representation in the General Court and in the United States Congress.

Governor Furcolo in his annual message to the Great and General Court on January 1, 1958 stated: "I recommend that immediate steps be taken to authorize or provide for a state office building, at reasonable cost, in conformity with generally accepted conditions. I urge that favorable consideration be given to the location of the proposed state office building within the

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ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN 'A'



GOVERNMENT CENTER PROJECT

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CITY PLANNING BOARD

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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SCALE IN FEET

suggested area known as the governmental center and that cooperation be encouraged among the federal government, the state government and the City of Boston in this endeavor to the end that this project may be undertaken without undue delay".

Mayor Hynes has submitted, and the City Council has approved a bill for the consideration of the General Court in 1958 which would authorize the City of Boston to borrow an amount not to exceed 50 million dollars to construct and sell to the United States a Federal office building. This legislation is significant in that it would guarantee to the Federal General Services Administration financing and a builder under the Federal Public Buildings Purchase Contract Act of 1954, the "lease-purchase" act.

PLAN FOR ACTION

Since the proposed project area qualifies as a decadent area under the provisions of Chapter 121 of General Laws as amended by Chapter 613 of the Acts of 1957, the Boston Redevelopment Authority should serve as the land purchase agent. It should proceed with the preparation of a Land Assembly and Redevelopment Plan and should assemble the necessary detailed information on costs, financing, and controls on development.

Since the project, due to its non-residential character, does not qualify for Federal redevelopment assistance, the Boston City Planning Board should, with city funds, assist the Redevelopment Authority in the planning of the project. Expert consultants should be engaged as soon as possible, including:

- (1) A city planning-architect team to prepare a final development plan for the project area and to serve as coordinating architects for the project.
- (2) A real estate consultant to report on the marketability and land values of the parcels within the project as they would be after clearance and improvements are completed, and to advise the site planners, and
- (3) Traffic and engineering consultants to advise on street and utility layout and design and placement of all off-street parking facilities.

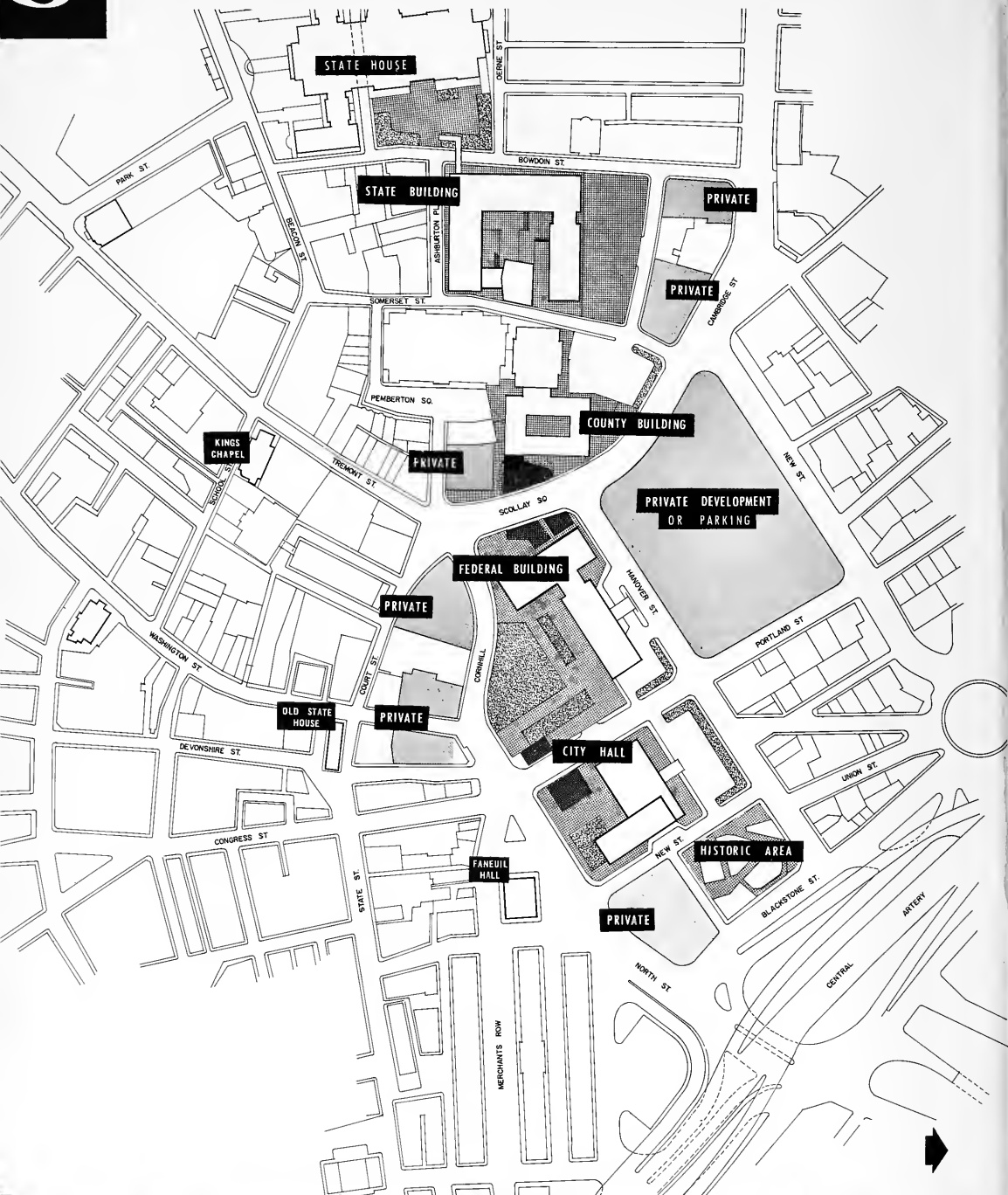
In the preparation of final plans, the maximum possible use should be made of any Federal aid available under Section 702 of the Housing Act of 1954, which provides for loans for the planning of public works. To develop final building plans, the appropriate Federal, State, and City agencies should obtain authority to engage architects for their specific buildings as soon as possible.

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ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN 'B'

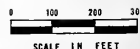


GOVERNMENT CENTER PROJECT

January, 1958

CITY PLANNING BOARD

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



Boston is an important and historic metropolis, the capitol of a major region, an outstanding port, the center of a significant industrial concentration, and a cultural and spiritual hub of world-wide importance. Many people are proud of Boston and respectful of its past and of its present, but more importantly, they want to be proud of its future. For more than a million people who live or work in Boston, and for many other millions to whom Boston is a cultural home, the Government Center can serve as a symbol of Boston's continuing stature as a great city of the world.







